have been medicinally investigated, are many of useful properties and decided efficacy. Several departments of the Materia Medica may be amply supplied from our own forests and meadows, although there are others, for which we must as yet depend on foreign countries. We have yet to discover our anodynes and our emetics, although we abound in bitters, astringents, aromatics and demulcents. In the present state of our knowledge we could not well dispense with opium and ipicacuanha, yet a great number of foreign drugs, such as gentian, columbo, chamomile, kino, catechu, cascarilla, canella, &c. for which we pay a large annual tax to other countries, might in all probability be superceded by the indigenous products of our own. It is certainly better that our own country people should have the benefit of collecting such articles, than that we should pay for them to the Moors of Africa, or the Indians of Brazil.

Independent of the frauds of adulteration, which may be practised by savages upon drugs, whose origin is hardly known to Europeans, the embarrassments occasioned by the chances of war and commercial restrictions, form serious objections to an exclusive dependence on foreign medicines. It is but a few years since some circum-

stances of this sort occasioned a sudden and enormous rise in the price of opium, and a general inquiry, what could be substituted for opium when the usual supplies should have failed.

In a work like the present, although we cannot hope to supply all the desiderata of an indigenous Materia Medica; yet it will be satisfactory to have done something towards an investigation of the real properties of our most interesting plants, and to have facilitated a knowledge of them in those, to whom they may be useful. In a pursuit of this kind, the botanist has views even beyond the physician. To him it is important not only to know what plants have properties, that are eminently useful, but also to know, what are the properties and uses of all the plants which surround him. In proportion as inquiries of this sort are pursued, the natural resources of a country become developed, and its natural disadvantages compensated. We are told that in China every plant is applied to some valuable purpose, and there is scarcely a weed that has not its determinate use.* A learned author† observes, that "no writer whatever has rendered the natural productions of the happiest and most luxuriant climate of the globe, half so interesting or instruc-

* Macartney's Embassy, vol. ii. chap. ii. † Sir J. E. Smith.

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